

REFORMATION TODAY



(see inside front cover)

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The above photo of Victor Budgen was taken at the after church meeting on the last Lord's Day before Victor was taken into the Lord's presence. Special guests on that occasion were friends from Namibia just before their return to that land.

Front cover: Eddie Coughlan and Norman Porter. The picture was taken after a minister's fraternal in Belfast. (Subject: the 1689 and the moral law of God, see comments on page 30.) The unity shared with the lively pastors of Ulster has been very beneficial.

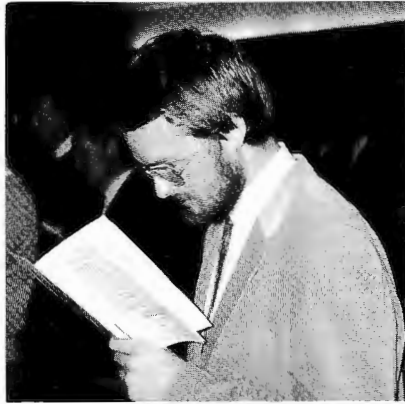
Editorial

The great demonstration of protest in China, ruthlessly suppressed; the vast mass marches in various parts of the Soviet Union; the convulsion in Poland; the revolution in East Germany; the crumbling of the infamous Berlin wall; the demise of Communism in East Germany; the spontaneous bloodless revolution and amazing changes in Czechoslovakia: these momentous events have been watched by us all with amazement. We have seen the first signs that Bulgaria is not invincibly Communist.

Perhaps it has become part of our mentality to think of the Communist nations as immutably gripped by the power of the secret police and frozen in the ice of suppression. Have we not been astonished at the swiftness of it all? Does this not show once again the truth that 'He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"' (Dan 4:35).

There are changes but this is only a beginning. We find ourselves still signing petitions to President Gorbachev to intervene on behalf of Christian leaders like Gennadi Kryuchkov who with his family have been persecuted for as long as we can remember and who are still being severely harassed.

There is no change in Romania which is possibly the brightest place for evangelical Christianity in Eastern Europe. On May 31st 1989 a newly built Baptist village church was demolished. The work only three years old had seen the congregation grow to 300. There was no legal reason for the destruction of the new building. It was done out of envy.



Tomasz Kalisz, an editor from Poland spent some time in England recently. Opportunity was afforded to review literature for Poland including the publication in Polish of the 1689 Confession of Faith. The photo was taken at the Tercentenary celebration of the 1689 at Westminster Central Hall, London, on September 9th. A report on the 1689 meetings held in various parts of Britain is under preparation.

The climactic events of the closing months of 1989 raise the question of the preparedness of the Reformed constituency to supply literature materials which will help and not hinder the evangelical communities of nations like Russia, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. These countries have suffered an appalling paucity of expository literature.

Before the advent of the Banner of Truth, Puritan literature was restricted to second hand bookshops. Now there is such a super abundance that we are compelled to be selective in our reading. A pastor is able to line his shelves with at least six or seven major

commentaries of the highest quality on Paul's letter to the Romans, not to mention shorter works. In Russia the priority is to supply adequate Bibles let alone think of Bible helps and commentaries. In this respect concerned Christians have undertaken to send Russian Bibles to personal addresses there. £6 pays for the packing, postage and sending one parcel with Bible, New Testament and one other available book such as a children's Bible. Mrs. B. Beevers, 18 Welburn Avenue, Leeds LS16 5HJ is happy to process any funding sent to her for this worthy cause.

Recently I studied a complete listing of available so called Christian books in Polish. There were hardly three or four which would have any significance in an average Reformed library. There seems to be a non existence of meaty biblical exposition or exegetical commentaries of value. Woe betide Polish pastors who cannot read English!

Freedom from the tyranny of Communism will not automatically solve the terrible economic plight of these countries. Nor will political adjustment be easy. Understandably the cry is already heard for retribution against the Communist overlords who have ruthlessly suppressed the majority at the same time enriching themselves with Swiss bank accounts. Even now some of them are being compared with Stalin or Ribbentrop. Moderate Communist leaders are falling over themselves in trying to distance themselves from former hardline Communist bosses. But there is hardly anybody in sight with experience of how to rule with democratic institutions. Freedom has to be learned.

Suddenly Christians in these countries are exposed to new spiritual dangers. How will they handle the temptation to move away from poverty and enjoy the relative prosperity of the West? Is there not a text in the psalms which suggests

that it is a judgement to be granted our materialistic desires but have leanness in our souls? (And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls. Ps 106:15, N.K.J.V.) It has been known for Eastern European believers to settle in the West and then lose their former spiritual zeal in the atmosphere of materialism.

Victor Budgen

Victor Budgen, pastor of the evangelical church in Milnrow, Rochdale in Lancashire was unexpectedly called to be with the Lord on October 27th. He complained of chest pains and was taken to hospital where he died of a heart attack. He was only 52 and coming into full maturity as a writer. Brought up in Methodism he left that denomination in the early 1970s and subsequently pastored the church at Milnrow. He wrote several articles for *Reformation Today* and has authored two books, namely, *Charismatics and the Word of God* (a revised edition has recently appeared), and a fine biography of John Hus, both books being published by E.P.

Victor was a caring pastor, an able preacher, a painstaking and accurate historian, a competent writer and a robust theologian. He was unflinching yet kind in the more controversial of his two books. The work was essential and continues to fulfil a very important ministry. With regard to the subject of prophecy he was particularly concerned not to concede to the principle that there can be two orders of prophecy, one infallible and the other less so. In that connection his article on Agabus was particularly significant (see *R.T.* 101). The local ministers' fraternal took place in his home and many young men will greatly miss his discerning counsel. Victor leaves his wife Pauline, two sons aged 25 and 16 and a daughter aged 21.

As a tribute to Victor an extract taken from his biography of Hus appears in this issue.

It may be observed that from the fall of man to our day, the work of Redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable pourings out of the Spirit of God.

Jonathan Edwards

Dr. R. H. Lescelius teaches in the Georgia Baptist College in America. For many years he has been involved in the organisation of an annual conference known as 'Maranatha' held at Worthington, Pennsylvania. The themes chosen for the conferences have been associated with the subject of spiritual awakening. Bob Lescelius has studied the history of revivals over many years. He pointed out in a recent letter that the Oxford Association for research in revival is still functioning. Dr. Edwin Orr, recently deceased, devoted his life to documenting revival. He left 800 papers which require editing.

The following article reminds us that revival and salvation history are knit together. We cannot understand the history of the Christian Church adequately without a grasp of this fact.

Revival and the History of the Church

Jonathan Edwards has been called the theologian of revival. His ministry in Northampton saw the spark that ignited the Great Awakening in the early days of colonial America. When a counterfeit movement arose that threatened to discredit the revival, Edwards wrote to defend it by revealing from the Scriptures the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God and by examining true and false religious experience. He brought out the truth that revival was a fact of salvation history. In his work, 'A History of the Work of Redemption', Edwards wrote:

‘It may be observed that from the fall of man to our day, the work of Redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable pourings out of the Spirit of God. Though there be a more constant influence of God’s Spirit always in some degree attending his ordinances, yet the way in which the greatest things have been done in carrying on this work always has been by remarkable pourings out of the Spirit at special seasons of mercy.’¹

Edwards equated salvation history with revival history. This was the view of the Puritans before him and was one that prevailed after him through the First and Second Evangelical Awakenings. The Church looked to God for revival to advance the work of the gospel. They saw revival as a sovereign out-pouring of the Spirit of God. This view has gradually been lost since the days of Charles G. Finney and his teaching that revivals can be promoted.

An understanding of revival is essential to properly pray for revival. While there is much talk of the need for revival in our day, it is not at all evident that there is a true understanding of what is needed or if there is a warrant for praying for it. We will examine revival and salvation history in order to show that revival is a principle of salvation history. It is how God works in history.

1. Revival is a Principle of Salvation History

Erich Sauer in his book, ‘The Dawn of World Redemption’, lists seven principles of salvation history, demanded by the change in the world condition due to the Fall of man. They are the principles of redemption, divine self-justification, human collapse, the holy remnant, the second before the first, continuous reformation and progressiveness.² Concerning continuous reformation he writes:

‘And yet, what took place? Out of the grace-endowed beginning of life and strength there issued always a race full of apostasy. What the fathers won by faith was mostly lost by the children as early as the third generation (Jud 2:7), and Jerusalem become Babel must finally, exactly as the former ‘world’, be given up to the judgment of destruction.

‘But in order that, in spite of all this, the divine plan should not fail, within this shallow circle (meanwhile become great, whose fathers were the standard-bearers of an earlier reformation), there must of necessity now be called a new and smaller circle, who should become the present transmitters of the revelation, so that in them the reformation of the past should, as it were, be requickened into a new reformation. And because in the course of time this is again and again accomplished, therefore the whole process of redemption is governed by the principle of a continuous reformation, and the history of salvation is like a curve with very marked zigzag movements in detail, but which nevertheless on the whole goes uninterruptedly upward.’³

What Sauer calls ‘requickening into a new reformation’, we recognise as revival. The revivals move the programme of God onward in a continuous progressiveness. This can be documented in the Scriptures and the history of the Church. Revival is a principle of salvation history.

2. Revival finds Precedents in Biblical History

The principle of revival can be seen throughout the biblical record. The fact of human declension and degeneration is vividly revealed in the Word of God, but God's grace is just as vividly displayed in interjecting life from above and lifting up his work to advance it. This can be seen in the sovereign call of the moon worshipper, Abraham, by the God of glory (Gen 12:13; Acts 7:2), beginning a definite line of progression in salvation history. Note the many times God 'appeared' to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to sustain and maintain the line.

Israel's history as a nation has its beginning with the power of God manifested in deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Moses and the miraculous conquest of Canaan under Joshua. Even within this period human apostasy and divine restoration are continually evident (examples: golden calf incident, murmurings, etc.). Judges records the spiritual declension of Israel in the land and the subsequent cycles of apostasy, oppression, heart-cry to God and a delivering judge (Jud 2:11-19). In Samuel's day spiritual darkness was followed by revival, followed by the choosing of a human king, Saul, instead of King Yahweh. This was followed by revival in David and declension in Solomon.

The divided kingdom clearly illustrates the principle of revival and salvation history. Both Israel in the North and Judah in the South, beginning at the same time, had nineteen kings. Israel had no good kings, and its history was one of continuous wickedness, idolatry and rebellion, ending up in anarchy, destruction and deportation to Assyria (721 BC). Yet, even in the wicked reign of Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, God graciously gave a measure of revival through the prophet Elijah (1 Kgs 17).

Judah also went into captivity for its sins. It fell to Babylon in three stages, 605, 597 and 586 B.C. Note that the southern kingdom lasted 135 years longer than the northern kingdom. Why? Judah saw *five revivals!* Revival preserved and advanced the programme of God in Judah 135 years. The significance of revival as a principle of salvation history is clearly revealed in the book of 2 Chronicles. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., makes this observation:

'The centrality of 2 Chronicles 7:14 for the study of revival in the Bible can be witnessed by the fact that it provides the outline for 2 Chronicles and sets the agenda for the material selected from the lives of five key Davidic kings of Judah. Each of the four conditions for revival is taken up separately as the single most important term for the reigns and lives of these five Judean monarchs. The resulting pattern forms an inclusio, with the first and last king sharing the same term. It may be plotted as follows:

Imperative	2 Chronicles	King
Humble yourselves	11-12	Rehoboam
Seek my face	14-16	Asa
Pray	17-20	Jehoshaphat
Turn from your wicked ways	29-32	Hezekiah
Humble yourselves	34-35	Josiah

Fifteen of the thirty-six chapters in the book, or almost half of the material, are given over to the reigns and revivals of these five kings, for they honoured God during their reigns by leading their people in revival. It is not an extravagant claim, then, to see the theme of revival as one of the central organising motifs of 2 Chronicles.”

So we see, not only divine sovereignty in revival, but also human responsibility in the record of the kingdom period of Israel’s history.

Declension brought the captivity, but revival is again seen in the restoration under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Three important Bible chapters dealing with the post-exilic restoration reveal the importance of prayer and revival. They are Daniel 9, Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9.

The O.T. canon ended, followed by 400 silent years, but the pages of the N.T. open with heaven again intervening with life from above, *the* Life, the Son of God himself. His ministry is prepared by a revival preacher named John the Baptist, and his ministry itself is marked by spiritual quickening. With our Lord’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension came the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). Pentecost stands, not only as a dispensational event, but a manifestation of power in the advancement of God’s purpose. Pentecost is ‘a pattern revival’, a firstfruits of harvest seasons to follow. The outpouring at Pentecost resulted in power to witness, a witness that reached the known world of that day (Acts 1:8). Acts 4 records another outpouring of Holy Spirit power to enable the Church to endure persecution. Revival has had these two purposes throughout subsequent Church history; quickening the Church to fruitful evangelism and faithfulness in persecution.

What do we learn from the biblical record of salvation history? We learn that God periodically, according to his sovereign purpose, intervenes supernaturally in history to quicken his people and advance his work. Without this divine interjection of life from above the course of nature would prevail and spiritual declension would end in apostasy and collapse. We learn also that the people of God are responsible to look to God for renewal and to meet the conditions of humility, prayer, seeking and repentance. The N.T. gives the full light that revival is our spiritual inheritance in Christ and is the work of the Holy Spirit upon whom the Church is utterly dependent and who works in relation to prayer (Acts 2:1-3; 4:23-31).

3. Revival Means Progress in Church History

What began at Pentecost continued through the Acts period and has continued throughout this dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The principle of salvation history continues in the history of the Church.

The Holy Spirit has come and is the permanent possession of the Church. Though the Scriptures teach that there is a normal operation of the Spirit in conviction, regeneration and sanctification, yet it must be observed that his working was not uniform and equal in intensity in the Acts history. A Spirit

filled Peter sees 3,000 saved in Acts 2, while a Spirit filled Stephen is martyred in Acts 7. Though the Spirit's power is manifested at Pentecost as he came upon the unified, praying saints in the upper room, he must fill them again with a fresh unction in the face of persecution in Acts 4.

The same thing is true in Church history. The measure and manifestations of the Spirit's working have not been the same in history, though he is in the Church permanently and his work is always consistent with the biblical record. As evidence of this truth we can point to the pattern of declension and revitalisation seen in Church history.

After the Apostolic Age Christianity spread and increased in numerical strength and prestige but also decreased in spiritual vitality. There were protests and movements of reform, but their influence did not prevent the professing Church from degenerating into a formalistic ecclesiastical system united to the State. The Dark Ages followed with glimmers of light appearing from time to time and place to place. Most noteworthy were the evangelical movements of the twelfth century onward, which revealed semblances of true spiritual life but also faced severe opposition and persecution from the Catholic hierarchy.

Then came Wycliffe and Hus, followed by the Reformation, and with the Reformation came the Puritan and Pietistic movements, followed by the great Evangelical Awakenings. Orr points out the Pentecostal pattern reproduced in the Evangelical Awakenings:

‘The events recorded in the Acts have been repeated in full or lesser degree in the Awakenings of past centuries. From the study of Evangelical Revivals or Awakenings in cities and districts, countries and continents, generations and centuries, it is possible to trace a pattern of action and discover a progression of achievement that establish in the minds of those who accept the New Testament as recorded history an undoubted conclusion that the same Spirit of God who moved the apostles has wrought his mighty works in the centuries preceding our own with the same results but with wider effects than those of which the apostles dreamed in their days of power.’⁵⁵

Up until the 1800s the evangelical Church recognised that revival was a principle of salvation history and looked to and called upon God to advance his cause through revival. As stated before this was the belief of the Puritans. Cotton Mather, an early American Puritan, wrote:

‘We can do very little. Our encumbrances are insuperable; our difficulties are infinite. If he would please, to fulfill the ancient Prophecy, of pouring out the Spirit on all flesh and revive the extraordinary and supernatural operations with which he planted his Religion in the primitive times of Christianity . . . his kingdom would make those advances in a day, which under our present and fruitless labours, are scarce made in an age.’⁵⁶

William B. Sprague, in his ‘Lectures on Revivals’ (first published in 1832), wrote about the importance of revivals to the Church:

‘It is for revivals that the church is continually praying; and to them that she is looking for accessions both to her numbers and her strength. The praise of revivals is upon her lips, and upon the lips of her sons and daughters, who come crowding to her solemn feasts. Such being the fact, no one can doubt that this is a subject which she ought well to understand; . . . which all should understand, who care for Zion’s prosperity.’⁷

Thus, the Church understood the principle of revival in salvation history. They looked to God to advance the cause of the gospel by means of revival. This principle must be seen again in our day. Iain Murray sums the matter up for us:

‘This, then, brings us to a point when we can state precisely what the older divines understood to be a revival. A revival, they united in saying, is a *‘copious effusion of the influence of divine grace’*. In the work of salvation God is pleased to bestow larger communications of his Spirit at certain times than at others, and when these larger communications of the Spirit occur the cause of the gospel is attended with extraordinary success.’⁸

4. Revival is a Prospect of Present History

In the light of the above truths, what should be our response in this present day of spiritual declension? First of all, we must recognise there has been a change in viewpoint in the Church concerning revival and realise how it came about. Then there must be a return to the old view of revival and an abandonment of the Finneyite promotion theory.

The Reformation, the Puritan and Pietistic movements, and the early Awakenings were marked by leaders who were sound theologians, possessing spiritual zeal with learning. The subsequent Awakenings were more lay orientated and increasingly lacking in theological strength. Though God has moved in sovereign power to advance the gospel world-wide, there has also been an impotence to counteract a humanistic culture, so that in our day we see a very shallow brand of evangelical Christianity. Where once the Church saw the importance and significance of revival, today she is generally ignorant and ignoring this biblical and historical principle of God’s working. Lovelace gives a reason for the declension:

‘There is no single and simple explanation of this transformation. It was the product of many subtle changes. . . . But perhaps the root cause of the decay of evangelicalism in America was the replacement of the old comprehensive concept of *revival* with the post-Finneyan machinery of *revivalism*.’⁹

Our concept of revival has changed. As long as we entertain notions of revival, equating it with a show of success evangelism, church growth, charismatic experiences, etc., we will not have the desperation and dependence necessary to true revival praying. If revival does come, we may miss it or compromise its results with faulty theology and methodology. Even where there is a genuine interest and concern for revival, there is a lack of concentrated effort to meet the divine conditions and cry out for revival. Discouragement often follows efforts to seek God for revival. Iain Murray points out one of the chief problems:

'Today, in contrast to the past, the whole mood has changed. Conviction about revival has been replaced by uncertainty. Many would confess that of this subject they are not sure what to believe. Revivals, generally speaking, have become a matter of doubt.'¹⁰

This doubt and uncertainty must be dispelled by sound teaching and the rehearsing of the mighty movings of God in the past history of the Church. This will deliver us from discouragement and despair and encourage us to persevering prayer (Ps 77:7-12).

In seeing the principles of human declension and divine revival, we must not fall into the trap of fatalism. These are not natural cycles as found in the seasons of nature. Periods of declension are due to God's wrath upon human sin and apostasy. Can we be content to continue under the displeasure of God? We are responsible to humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways (2 Chron 7:14).

Nor should we sit back in passivity and wait for the next wave of revival. God's sovereignty is no excuse for a spirit of glib optimism. We are responsible for reformation in doctrine and practice in our lives and churches. We are responsible to pray. There is direct relation between prayer and the operation of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13; Acts 4:31; Phil. 1:19).

It is also important that we do not come to the faulty conclusion that nothing is being accomplished because we are not seeing revival as in days gone by. We do not want to over emphasise it to the point of being a cause of discouragement to faithful service to Christ. We are to obey the Word of God and leave the results to him. God works through his Word and by his Spirit in times of low spiritual tide as well. Then too, he may be hearing our prayers and 'filling the ditches' silently (1 Kgs 3), unnoticed to human perception. As Iain Murray notes: 'The truth is that many servants of Christ have been called to minister in days not distinguished by revival and yet these ministries are not fruitless.' We must remember that the Jeremiahs and Ezekiels are just as used of God as the Peters, Pauls and Whitefields.

Yet we must emphasise again that revival is a neglected doctrine in our day, needing re-emphasis. The danger is not an over emphasis. We agree with Iain Murray:

'Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasised that the most common mistake today does not arise from giving revivals an exaggerated importance. A greater danger comes from precisely the opposite direction, namely, the danger of undervaluing them, even disparaging or forgetting them. When we define revivals as a heightening of the normal that must not be understood as though it makes little difference whether or not the church sees revival. True revivals do make an enormous difference. They are God's means of changing the history of the church and the history of nations. Something happens in revivals which is distinctive, unmistakable and revolutionary in effect.'¹¹

(continued on next page)

The life and death of John Hus

John Hus (1373-1415) of Bohemia is regarded as one of the founding fathers of Czechoslovakia which today consists of essentially two cultures, Czech and Slovak. Hus was a Czech, born in Southern Bohemia and educated at the University of Prague. Ordained in 1401 he became rector of the university and preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel. Sons of thunder like John the Baptist who seem to emerge from nowhere are very unusual. Most powerful preachers learn from the example of others. This was evidently the case with Hus. Prague had been under the powerful reformist preaching of Conrad of Waldhausen, Jan Milic and Matthew of Janow. Hus entered this dynamic tradition.

The spread of books written by Wyclif played a crucial role at this time. Jerome of Prague (1371-1416) who was to be martyred a year after Hus, had returned from Oxford bringing copies of Wyclif's books with him. Hus was to be burned at the stake, aged only 42, for his espousal of Wyclif's teachings. The sentence of death passed upon him at the Council of Constance coupled his name with that of Wyclif.

Hus' ministry involved him in close contact with the common people as well as the learned. He was stimulated to study the Scriptures closely. He was heavily indebted to Wyclif. While not as original in his powers of analysis and

We close with these words of Jonathan Edwards:

'God has had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfill his promise and oath to him; and these times are times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his Kingdom.'¹²

Revivals are times when God glorifies his dear Son. Should not this be motivation enough to move us to pray for and seek revival? *R. H. Lescelius*

Notes

¹ Jonathan Edwards, *The History of Redemption* (reprint, Marshalton, Del.: The National Foundation for Christian Education, n.d.), p. 40.

² Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1951), pp. 49-54.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Quest for Revival* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 15.

⁵ J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), p. viii.

⁶ Cotton Mather, quoted by Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*

(Downers Grove, Il.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), pp. 45, 46.

⁷ William B. Sprague, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (reprint of 1832 edition; London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), pp. 3, 4.

⁸ Iain H. Murray, 'The Necessary Ingredients of a Biblical Revival', *The Banner of Truth*, Issue 104 (Jan. 1979), p. 23.

⁹ Lovelace, *Dynamics*, p. 51.

¹⁰ Murray, 'Necessary Ingredients', p. 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹² Jonathan Edwards, quoted by Arthur Wallis, *In the Day of Thy Power* (London: Christian Literature Crusade, 1956), p. 18.

formulation as Wyclif, Hus nevertheless possessed a more popular style of presentation. In his preaching and writing he stressed the supreme authority of Scripture. He raised the status of preaching in church services. Hus was sharp in his criticism of a corrupt clergy. He compared the medieval Church in its pomp and riches with the poverty of the apostles. He rejected and opposed indulgences. He exposed the hocus pocus of false miracles based on superstition. Hus taught clearly that Christ and not the Pope is the head of the Church which he defined as the whole number of the predestined. Yet we must remember that in those times believers struggled against great odds and intense darkness as they grappled to come to terms with the truths of Scripture. They did not in one stroke see all the truth. Hus was not clear about transubstantiation.

During the period 1402 to 1409 Hus hoped to accomplish a powerful reformation. Inevitably the implications of his teaching came into conflict with the bureaucrats of the Roman Catholic Church. At first the archbishop of Prague supported reform but when controversy increased and the pressures mounted he turned against Hus.

A crisis point was reached in 1410 when the authorities ordered that all Wyclif's writings be seized and burned, and at the same time all preaching in unauthorised places was forbidden. 200 copies of Wyclif's writings were burned in the courtyard of the archbishop's palace. In his support of Wyclif's writings Hus enjoyed widespread support and hence was able, in spite of opposition, and the embroiling of the city in controversy, to continue his ministry.

The battle for truth was relentless and persecution became more intense. In 1412 Hus was put under major excommunication which meant that all fellowship with other Christians was forbidden.

In 1415 Hus attended the famous Council of Constance travelling under the promise and guarantee of safety given by Emperor Sigismund. However soon after his arrival he was arrested and imprisoned. In detention he suffered excruciatingly painful conditions which he scarcely survived. It is noteworthy that the Czech people were enraged by the treatment meted out to their leader. They regarded the Pope and the Emperor as his murderers. The flagrant betrayal of the guarantee of a safe return from Constance infuriated them. Hus' execution, and that of Jerome, left a mark on the whole future course of Christian history.

The Hussite movement, far from vanishing, as its enemies planned and hoped for on the death of its leader, entered upon an amazing period of development and defiance against the rest of Roman Catholic dominated Christendom. The nobles of Bohemia defied orders to root out heresy and declared that Hus had been a great and good Catholic. They also bound themselves by oath to maintain the gospel and its preachers. The Hussite movement became independent and in 1420 the Pope declared a crusade against the heretics in

Bohemia. Subsequently the Hussites were more than a match in successfully defending themselves.

Philip Schaff points out the significance of the fact that not one of the members of the Council of Constance uttered a word of protest against the unjust sentence upon Hus. No pope or ecumenical synod has ever made any apology for it. Says Schaff: 'So long as the dogmas of an infallible Church organisation and an infallible pope continue to be strictly held, no apology can be expected' (vol. 6, p. 383).

The account of part of Hus' trial and his death at the stake is extracted from the biography by Victor Budgen in the paragraphs which follow.

The following day, 6 July, Hus was brought to the cathedral where Sigismund was presiding, wearing his crown (of mockery). On a table lay the various priestly garments prepared for the unfrocking of Hus, who fell to his knees and prayed for some time. In apt symbolism of the evil incompetence of the Roman authorities who condemned Hus, a bishop then delivered a sermon on a text again taken wildly out of context. It was based on Romans 6:6: 'That the body of sin be destroyed'. The bishop coupled Hus with Arius and Sabellius in his address, placing schism in the first rank of evil, asserting that heresies were widespread and blaming much of the iniquity and vandalism of the day onto them.

Turning to Sigismund, he declared that he was called particularly to heal the schism and put an end to heresy. He thus addressed the king, 'To the performance of so holy a work, God has conferred upon you the wisdom of divine truth, the power of royal majesty and the justice of right equity. As the Most High has said (Jer 1), "Lo, I have put my words into thy mouth by imparting wisdom, and I have placed thee over the nations and kingdoms by conferring power, that thou mightest root up and by executing justice." So mayest thou destroy heresy and error; and especially this obstinate heretic, by whose malign influence many regions have been infected with the pest of heresy, and by reason of whom many things have gone to ruin.'

Later in the proceedings Sigismund was observed to blush when Hus alluded to the pledge of a safe-conduct which had proved so empty a promise. In a letter Hus also mentions Christ, who deceives no man by a safe-conduct. Faced by the bishop's empty panegyric, Sigismund might well have blushed earlier, yet it would seem that he readily accepted all the compliments as due to him. However, the moment when he blushed was not to be forgotten. When, at the celebrated Diet of Worms, the enemies of Luther pressed Charles V to have him seized, in contempt of the safe-conduct which he had given him, his reply was very revealing. 'No,' he said, 'I should not like to blush like Sigismund.'

The same items which were dealt with in the council were read out by an old, bald man and the charge of obstinate heresy was made yet again. Then Hus's books suspected of heresy were commanded to be burned. Once more Hus himself would not be silenced, as he protested, 'Why do you condemn my

books, when I have ever desired and demanded better scriptural proofs against what I said and set forth in them, and even today I so desire? But you have so far neither adduced any more relevant Scripture in opposition, nor have shown one erroneous word in them.' Furthermore many of the works, as Hus reminded them, were in Czech, which hardly any of his judges could read.

Hus continued then to pray as the sentence was read and Peter (a friend and supporter of Hus), again catches a poignant moment: 'Master John Hus again knelt and in a loud voice prayed for all his enemies and said: "Lord Jesus Christ, I implore thee, forgive all my enemies for thy great mercy's sake; and thou knowest that they have falsely accused me and have produced false witnesses and have concocted false articles against me! Forgive them for thy boundless mercy's sake!" And when he said this, many, especially the principal clergy, looked indignantly and jeered at him.'

At the command of the seven bishops who assisted at his unfrocking, he had then to dress in the altar vestments. Upon which he said, 'My Lord Jesus Christ, when he was led from Herod to Pilate, was mocked in a white garment.' At every point Hus was upheld by the example of Christ himself. He still rejected the commands to abjure, whereupon many remarked how exceedingly great his wickedness was. Then we read in the moving words of Peter: 'After he descended from the table, the said bishops at once began to unfrock him. First they took the cup from his hands, pronouncing this curse: "O cursed Judas, because you have abandoned the counsel of peace and have counselled with the Jews, we take away from you the cup of redemption." He replied in a loud voice: "I trust in the Lord God Almighty, for whose name I patiently bear this vilification, that he will not take away from me the cup of his redemption; but I firmly hope to drink it today in his kingdom."'

After undressing him and pronouncing various curses, his enemies then began to disagree among themselves as to how they should get rid of his tonsure (the bare patch on the head of a priest). Some wanted to shave the rest of his head. Others wished to cut off the remaining hair with scissors. But all were united in their wish to make him look a fool and humiliate him. This was also undoubtedly the intention of those who went on to place on his head the paper crown which showed a picture of three horrible devils about to seize a soul and tear it to pieces with their claws.

However, once again, Hus himself recalled an incident from the crucifixion of his Lord and said, 'My Lord Jesus Christ on account of me, a miserable wretch, bore a much heavier and harsher crown of thorns. Being innocent, he was deemed deserving of the most shameful death. Therefore I, a miserable wretch and sinner, will humbly bear this much lighter, even though vilifying crown for his name and truth.' It is amazing how throughout, Hus was repeatedly sustained by remembering what happened to Jesus Christ himself in his crucifixion.

As Hus was led from the church, the scene of his humiliation, he smiled as he saw a bonfire of his own books. Almost the whole of the city turned out to watch him on the road to his own death and, as Peter says, many of the lay people instinctively knew that Hus was a good man. He was tied to a stake with ropes, a sooty chain was put round his neck, and the wood piled round him up to his chin. At this point Hus was again urged to recant and he again refused, asserting that the main intent of all his preaching and writing was to 'turn men from sin'.

Peter goes on: 'When the executioners at once lit the fire, the master immediately began to sing in a loud voice, at first "Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon us", and secondly, "Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me", and in the third place, "Thou who art born of Mary the virgin". And when he began to sing the third time, the wind blew the flame into his face. And thus praying within himself and moving his lips and the head, he expired in the Lord.'

Other accounts emphasise the courage of Hus throughout all this. Especially interesting also is the comment of Aeneas Sylvius, who later became pope and who knew all the circumstances of the deaths of Hus and Jerome (who was to die in the same way, though not without some wavering beforehand, almost a year later). He wrote, 'They went to their punishment as to a feast. Not a word escaped them which gave indication of the least weakness. In the midst of the flames they sang hymns uninterruptedly to their last breath. No philosopher ever suffered death with such constancy as they endured the flames.' This is indeed an amazing tribute.

Hus' enemies were determined to obliterate his remains as far as this was possible and Peter continues by describing how 'the executioners pulled the charred body along with the stake down to the ground and burned them further by adding wood to the fire. And walking around, they broke the bones with clubs so that they would be incinerated more quickly. And finding the head, they broke it to pieces with the clubs and again threw it into the fire.

After finding the heart, they likewise made sure that this was burned to ashes, and then someone, realising that his clothing might be venerated and treated as relics by his followers, checked that this was thoroughly consumed by fire. 'So they loaded all the ashes in a cart and threw it into the river Rhine flowing nearby.' A later account, possibly also by Peter, adds at this point, that they were 'wishing to destroy, as far as they could, his memory among the faithful'. It was a futile endeavour. God had other purposes.

The Story of John Hus with the title *On Fire for God* by Victor Budgen, 323 pages, paperback, is published by Evangelical Press.

Fellowship and the Intermediate State

Last time we considered the Nature of Christian Fellowship. We saw the fellowship we are to encourage with each other is of the same exalted and glorious kind or nature as that which exists in the Trinity. There can be no doubt about that, since Jesus when he prayed for the unity of the Church (Jn 17:21-24), referred specifically to the Trinity as the model for our relationships with each other.

It was pointed out last time that it is essential to distinguish clearly between the intermediate state and the state of the new heaven and the new earth. It seems that widespread confusion prevails today as to what happens immediately upon death. Does a believer fall into a sleep to await the great resurrection? Or does he pass into a fully conscious state in which he enjoys fellowship, that is fellowship in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with the company of the redeemed and the company of the angels? (Heb 12:22-24). We will address that subject now. The question raised last time concerning ways in which we should seek to improve personal inter-church fellowship I hope to develop in a future issue.

When we speak of a believer dying and going to heaven that terminology is correct. But is it correct to speak of the new earth as heaven? We will have glorified bodies which occupy an earthly habitat which is very different from the heavenly realm occupied by the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

The subject is brought to life when we think of Elijah's translation from this earthly realm to a heavenly sphere. His body must have been changed in the process to become a spiritual body, the same spiritual body which appeared with Moses and Christ and with Peter, James and John on the mount of transfiguration. When the resurrection comes all human spirits will be reunited with their bodies. As Elijah was taken up we must not imagine that he fell asleep on the way. It was a triumphant entrance into the heavenly realm (2 Pet 1:11). If he did fall asleep in his heavenly chariot to be laid to rest in some heavenly nook until the great day of resurrection why is it that we find him alert and active on the mount of transfiguration?

If you question your friends about this you may well find that they have taken the references to sleep in Scripture to mean literal sleep of the soul as well as the body. They take it that the departed believer sleeps until the day the trumpet

sounds at the time of the universal resurrection of all without exception to the bodily (physical) resurrection. The texts that lead them to that conclusion are John 11:11-14, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep'; Matthew 9:24, 'The girl is not dead but asleep'; Acts 7:60, 'When Stephen said this, he fell asleep'; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 'We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed'; 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, 'Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.' Also we should note the reference of Daniel, 'Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake' (Dan 12:2).

These verses without exception refer to the death of the body. Outwardly the person who has died appears to be asleep. He is no longer responding in any way to the affairs of this world. His body is destined to turn to dust and his body will sleep in the dust.

Some anabaptists taught that the sleep of death included both the body and soul. John Calvin's first theological treatise was written to refute this error, *De Psychopannychia* (on soul sleep). Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists hold the view that the soul sleeps immediately after death and remains in sleep until the resurrection.

The Bible is differently interpreted as we have just seen. We can start therefore with the Confessions of Faith, see what scripture proofs are suggested, and then explore the meaning of those and other passages for ourselves.

The Confession of Faith

The Westminster Confession of Faith of the Presbyterians, The Savoy Confession of the Congregationalists and our own 1689 Baptist Confession have the same wording on the subject of the intermediate state. Transliterated into modern English this is what chapter 31 paragraph one says:

'The bodies of men after death return to dust and suffer decay, but their souls which neither die nor sink into a state of unconsciousness – they are inherently immortal – immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, whose holiness is at death perfected, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, looking upon the face of God in light and glory, and waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Souls separated from their bodies are either in paradise or hell, for the Scripture speaks of no other abodes of the departed.' (*A Faith to Confess*, Carey Publications.)

The textual support cited for the above is Luke 23:43; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 12:23; 2 Corinthians 5:1-6; Phil 1:28.

Scriptures that teach that the believer's soul is conscious in paradise

The Old Testament scripture above in the Confession is a suitable place to

begin, 'The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it' (Ecc 12:7). Charles Bridges is clear and hardly needs any additional comment:

'What then is the end for all mankind? Each part of man returns to his original source — his body to the earth as it was; the spirit — to God of whom it is, and who gave it. And where now is the spirit found? In unconscious slumber of the grave? Far from it! It returns to God — home whence it came — to 'the Father of spirits', who claims it for himself. The body sleeps as the earnest of waking again. But the soul is in conscious immortality. The God of Moses was the God of the Patriarchs long departed. But we are emphatically told, that he is 'not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him' (Lk 20:37, 38). 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise' (Lk 23:43), said our Lord to the malefactor, who was dying at his side. And in what state there in paradise? Senseless and lifeless? No: alive to its glories; transported with its blessedness. And when Paul thought of being 'absent from the body', what did he connect with this absence? What did he look upon as its immediate consequence? He knew that he should be 'found with the Lord' (2 Cor 5:6-8).¹

It is true that we are limited as to textual references concerning this subject. It is admitted that we can compile a much clearer picture of the eternal kingdom after the resurrection and the glorification of our bodies than we can of the intermediate state. Nevertheless from the few texts that we do have we can come to definite conclusions. Hebrews 12:18-24 is especially decisive. There we have two paragraphs devoted to the main purposes of highlighting the great contrast between the mountain of Sinai with God's throne which was entirely inaccessible, and Mount Zion to which all believers have an immediate and unimpeded access at all times. The contrast is heightened by the stress on the believer's privilege. He comes most freely to Mount Zion. He comes to the Father through the one and only mediator of the new covenant. That is a privilege of superlative value, a privilege enhanced by the description of the dominions over which Jesus now reigns. That dominion includes 'thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly'. They are not sleepy angels. They are not idle angels. They are active. They are organised. They are in joyful assembly.

The passage stresses that this company of heaven includes 'the spirits of righteous men made perfect'. The salient facts conveyed by the text are 1. The righteous in heaven are spirits, that is disembodied spirits. 2. The spirits of the departed righteous now in the company of heaven have been made perfect. This means that they have been delivered from indwelling sin completely, and, 3. These spirits having been so perfected are thereby equipped for the fellowship with the Lord of that heaven, and with the heavenly company of angels who serve him. It follows that it is entirely inappropriate for us to think of these who have been perfected as being asleep.

The reasoning of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10, is most significant as it relates to our subject especially if we link it with 1 Corinthians 15 which supplies us

with a full description of the glorious resurrection body. That glorified body is a building or solidly constructed house, compared with the fragile tent of a body we now have. But a disembodied spirit is compared to nakedness (2 Cor 5:3). Death involves a violent severing of soul from the body, a disintegration which is horrifying and terrifying because it is unnatural. The sting of it has been taken out of death for believers. Nevertheless it is an experience of passing to 'nakedness'. It is important to observe that Paul is saying that should Christ return during his lifetime he should immediately have a glorious physical body like Christ's (Phil 3:21), and thereby escape the 'nakedness' which results from the separation of body and soul.

Also to be taken into account is Paul's statement that 'to depart and be with Christ is better by far' (Phil 1:23). Surely that departure is not to a sleep but to a conscious enjoyment of Christ in paradise.

Here we groan increasingly with a decaying and disintegrating tent. Those who have died in Christ have their spirits perfected and now in his presence they have joy and bliss. For them there is no groaning, no anxiety or temptation or pain or tears. Nevertheless as spirits they are naked, not literally but metaphorically, not discomfited to be sure, nor embarrassed, yet limited and restricted until the trumpet sounds. Then their perfected souls will be joined with their bodies which will be perfect and glorified.

A parallel passage is that of Revelation 6:9-11, where we have a vision of heaven. John sees the souls of the martyrs under the altar. The period referred to is the time between the first and second coming of Christ. These souls cry out for ultimate justice. Their prayers are not vindictive. Like Abel's blood, the blood of these martyrs of Jesus is a cry of outraged justice. We have to be careful of the danger of making too much of this passage which is symbolic. Yet it is equally mistaken to make too little of a description which is so vivid. These souls are described as praying with a loud voice. Their petition is clearly defined. That speaks of spiritual life and activity, not sleep.

An important principle in the interpretation of Scripture is to bring the clearer passages to bear on those that are more difficult. The account of the Rich Man and Lazarus is often called a parable (Lk 16:19-31). But when we look at the details there is nothing concerning the two men described which is not literal, other than the expression 'Abraham's bosom'. As the details of their earthly lives are literal, so the experience of each at death is literal. Both are fully conscious after death: the rich man in the torments of hell, and Lazarus 'who is comforted'. There is a consciousness in the rich man concerning those who remain on earth. Nothing is said concerning the extent of what Lazarus could see on earth or in fact the extent to which he could comprehend heaven.

Conclusions

1. Immediately upon death souls pass into a state which is termed intermediate because that state is temporary. 'This disembodied state is not the final state.'

Neither bliss nor woe can be complete until the integrity of personal life is restored by the resurrection. Though the bliss of the saints and the woe of the wicked are not complete in the intermediate state, yet the consummation of bliss is irreversibly reserved for the saints and the consummation of woe for the wicked. The bliss enjoyed in the one case, and woe endured in the other, in the intermediate state, is to the full measure of the capacity of disembodied spirits.²

2. There is no warrant in Scripture for the notion of soul-sleep or of semi-consciousness in the intermediate state.
3. Since the spirits of the righteous are made perfect, and since we have examples like that of Moses and Elijah in fellowship with Christ in the presence of Peter, James and John, we can conclude that fellowship is of the essence of heaven now for all those who die in Christ. Paul's testimony concerning his experience of being caught up to paradise where 'he heard inexpressible things that man is not permitted to tell' (2 Cor 12:4), confirms this view. We conclude that there is in the fellowship of heaven now for those who have died in Christ the highest conceivable bliss.
4. There is no basis whatever in Scripture to believe that there is any other place apart from heaven and hell for the departed spirits of the righteous and the wicked. There is nothing to support the idea of probation or a second chance to repent. And nor is it possible to find a single place in the Bible to support the idea of purgatory. The fire referred to in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 is a fire which is not purgatorial or refining or purifying, but clearly a fire in which the wood, hay and stubble of the Christian's work will be totally demolished. The apostle is teaching us in that place that the believer will receive his reward based on the assessment according to the faithfulness of his labours. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 is a warning (especially for pastors) that they are not to cut the corners by comprising the terms of church membership or by giving way to the methods of easy believism. The judgement of Christ is one in which quality and not quantity counts. At any rate 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 has nothing whatever to do with purgatory.
5. The desperately miserable state, the unmitigated torment, the appalling prospect of a never ending eternity in hellfire for the wicked who die unrepentant, should fill us with compassion and determination to proclaim far and wide the saving gospel of Christ. Evangelism and mission should be our supreme aim in life.

¹ Commentary on Ecclesiastes, Banner of Truth, page 297.

² Prof. John Murray, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 402.

The above material formed the substance of a sermon preached at Jennyfield Evangelical Church, Harrogate, on Lord's Day morning December 3rd, as a memorial to that church's most senior member, Tom Ward, highly valued, loved and esteemed, who passed into the presence of the Lord on the morning of the previous Lord's Day aged 75.

This discussion is limited to guidelines for the selection of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: it is not a discussion of whether psalms only should be sung, and questions of whether choirs or musical accompaniment are permitted cannot be considered here. If the principle of accompaniment of singing is accepted, as in the majority of our churches, then the question of what accompaniment is suitable has to be an open one: to argue that only a piano or organ is sanctioned by Scripture is impossible. Certainly the Psalms point to an exciting variety and flexibility! Reformation should be characterised by creativity within the regulative principle of Scripture and not, as is often the case, all by negatives and prohibitions.

Selection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Worship Services

Worship of the Triune God is the most glorious and joyful activity possible for men and angels, and from the beginning music has been ordained as a most fitting expression of that praise. God has endowed human beings with a capacity for music which we may see as being part of his own image. Although it is an anthropomorphism the Father himself is said to joy over the redeemed with singing (Zeph 3:17). Our Lord Jesus Christ is said to sing praises to God in the congregation (Heb 2:12). The angels and glorified saints in heaven ceaselessly sing praises (Rev 5:8-14). Even the morning stars sang for joy at the earth's foundation (Job 38:7) and all the earth is called by the Psalmist to sing to the Lord (Ps 96:1).

Should not the redeemed do the same? Scripture witnesses to the place of music in worship, and through Church history revivals have been accompanied by the writing of great hymns of praise. Where there is a reality and immediacy in the spiritual experience of the Church it is likely that there will be spontaneous and fresh expressions of joyful praise in song. It is most refreshing when a group of believers produces its own testimony in song.¹ While it is excellent to draw on the best of the psalmody and hymnody of past ages it is suitable to seek out the

best of contemporary music, and also to encourage the development of the gifts of composition.

Music in the Old Testament

Joyful response to the saving deeds of Jehovah was expressed in song in the Old Testament. Moses, Miriam and the Israelites sang to the Lord after the deliverance at the Red Sea (Ex 15). The Ark was brought back to Jerusalem with joyful songs (1 Chron 15:16). David, himself a harpist, appointed musicians for service in the temple (1 Chron 25), and composed many psalms including those intended for corporate use (eg. Pss 24; 145). A wide variety of instruments were used in praise (Ps 150:3-5). In post-exilic worship there were arrangements for responsive singing between two choirs (Ezra 3:11; Ne 12:24,31). In the pattern of synagogue worship an expression of corporate praise opened the service.

Music in the New Testament

Joy accompanies the New Testament fulfilment of God's saving purposes, and that joy is expressed in song. Luke records four songs of joy at the advent of the Messiah (Lk 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:14, 29-32). Gratitude for salvation by grace should overflow in song (Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:15-16; Jas 5:13). The early assem-

blies sang hymns (1 Cor 14:26) and several of the most exalted Christological passages (Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; 1 Tim 3:16), were probably originally hymns. Our Lord himself closed the Last Supper with the singing of a hymn (Matt 26:30) probably one or more of the Hallel Psalms. In his vision of glory John saw trumpets and harps (Rev 8:2; 14:2) and beheld the living creatures, angels and saints singing (Rev 5:8-13). Throughout the Revelation songs of praise are interspersed which draw heavily on Old Testament terminology.

Music in Services of Worship

Nowhere does Scripture provide details of a rubric for worship services, but broad principles are given. Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs may all be used in praise to God (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19).

The Psalms were the main hymnary used by the Church for about a thousand years. After the Reformation those churches which followed the pattern of worship advocated by Calvin used the Psalms alone. Today in many churches, by way of contrast, the Psalms are sadly neglected.

Although it is difficult to distinguish between the hymns and spiritual songs spoken of in the above texts, it is possible to draw a historical distinction between these categories. Augustine defined a hymn as 'a song of praise to God'. It must be directed to God, it must consist of praise, and it must be sung.² Another definition says that a hymn must be scriptural, it must be an objective expression of praise to God, and it must be lyrical.³

The so-called 'gospel song' rose to popularity in the nineteenth century. The camp-meeting movement in America gave birth to a style of song which was simple and repetitive, which used catchy rhythmic tunes and inclu-

ded choruses. Sometimes hymns were adapted for camp-meeting use, for example the thoughtful 'Alas! and did my Saviour bleed' (Isaac Watts) was given a jolly tune and a rather trivial chorus.⁴ The Sunday School movement from the 1840s onwards took up this form of song and further popularised it. The Finney 'revival' meetings marked the development of 'invitation hymns' specifically to be used prior to or during an 'altar call'.

Donald Hustad defines the 'gospel song' as a song concerned with the *basic* gospel message and comments: 'Basically, the poetry was simpler than that of a hymn – less theological and less biblical, less challenging to the imagination, sometimes even inane. The musical structure was characterised by a refrain (a novelty in hymns), a simple lyric melody, inconsequential harmony and a sprightly rhythm.'⁵ The Moody Sankey campaigns led to the further development of the 'witness song', songs of personal testimony, often for solo use. The most prolific and well known gospel song writer was probably Fanny Crosby. Gospel songs such as 'Tell me the old, old story' (Arabella Hankey) or 'Will your anchor hold' (Priscilla Owens) are directed throughout to another person rather than to God. Others are soundly objective such as 'Praise Him, praise Him, Jesus our blessed Redeemer' (Fanny Crosby). Each needs to be thoughtfully considered.

Perhaps the phrase 'spiritual song' could be applied to the 'scripture songs' or choruses popular in many fellowships today. Some of these are very beautiful, and serve to impress Scripture texts in the memory. Examples would include: 'For unto us a child is born'⁶; 'How lovely on the mountains' (Leonard Smith, 1974); 'Therefore the redeemed of the Lord' (Ruth Lake, 1972). Because some of these are brief, there is an

unfortunate tendency to repeat them over and over, but a tasteful selection of several joined together (the Americans would call it a 'medley') can work to good effect if an overhead projector is used and the accompanist well prepared to avoid breaking the continuity by announcing numbers. It has to be said that some popular choruses fall into the same category as some of the gospel songs, in the tendency to sentimentality or subjectivity; again each has to be carefully considered.

Practical Suggestions for the Selection of Psalms, Hymns and Songs

Every psalm, hymn or song must be placed in the service as an act of praise or prayer or as an expression of faith or devotion.⁷ The following broad principles for selection may be suggested:

1 SINGING SHOULD BE WITH THE MIND

Each hymn should be carefully read through to check for sense. Obscure phraseology could be commented on and explained. It may be helpful for attention to be drawn to outstanding doctrinal truths contained in the hymn. It is refreshing sometimes to read the Scripture verse or passage from which the hymn is derived (eg. enjoyment of 'O worship the King' (Robert Grant) is enhanced when it is read alongside Ps 104). Carson points out that the passages concerning 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' both link singing with instruction. 'If our hymns are to be a vehicle not only of praise to God, but also instruction, then clearly they must have a doctrinal content which will engage our minds, even as the music stirs our emotions.'

2 A GOOD PROPORTION OF THE SINGING SHOULD BE CORPORATE AND OBJECTIVE

Many excellent hymns were originally composed for private devotional use and are thus naturally in the first person

singular. (As indeed are many beautiful psalms such as Ps 23.) There is a place for these personal hymns, but all too often one may attend a 'four hymn' service where three or even all of the hymns are written in the first person singular. As Rayburn aptly comments: 'When the Christian church meets together for worship . . . it is not just to meet the needs of individual members of the congregation, but it is also, and very importantly, to afford the church as the body of Christ opportunity to adore and worship the divine Head of the body. The hymn is the corporate and audible expression of that devotion. . . . It is a united offering of the congregation's worship, and not just an opportunity for sincere and devout Christians to conduct their personal devotions.'⁹ Thus there should be in every service at least some hymns written as corporate expressions of praise and adoration.

The balance between subjective or objective and personal or corporate is perfectly reached in the Psalms. They contain inspired material on all the attributes of the Triune God, but also 'show how we should respond to him in awe, adoration, wonder, delight, penitence, gladness and hope. The note of praise and joy they strike surpasses anything in Christian hymnody.'¹⁰

3 THERE SHOULD BE A BALANCE SO THAT ALL ASPECTS OF WORSHIP ARE REGULARLY COVERED

It is appropriate for worship services to open with a psalm or hymn extolling God for his majesty, eternity, transcendence and grace. For example Psalms 48, 65, 66, 93, 96, 98 etc.¹¹ Or hymns such as 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise' (Walter Chalmers Smith; based on 1 Tim 1:17) or 'Give to our God immortal praise' (Isaac Watts; based on Ps 136) or 'Holy, holy, holy' (Reginald Heber; based on Rev 4:8). Or a briefer Scripture song could be used such as 'Thou art

worthy' (Pauline Michael Mills, 1963, 1975) or 'He is Lord'.¹²

To remember the holiness and transcendence of God leads naturally to remembrance of our own unholiness, and it is appropriate to include a psalm or hymn containing sentiments of penitence. Some effectively combine aspects of praise and contrition, such as 'Great God of wonders' (Samuel Davies) or Psalm 103.¹³

Congregational singing should include praise specifically to God the Father, as the goal of our worship,¹⁴ the Son as the Mediator of our approach to God, and the Spirit as the One who aids us to worship and pray. There is a place for expression of confidence and trust in God, for testimony of assurance of forgiveness and a place for challenge to zeal and service, as long as these more 'people centred' songs are balanced with true praise. Despite modern criticism, we should not be shy to include hymns which emphasise the blood of the Lamb (eg. 'There is a fountain' by William Cowper, compare the glorious song of Rev 5:9-10). There is most certainly a place for singing of the desire that God's name be glorified in the whole earth. If when selecting hymns one is frustrated at the dated nature of the missionary section, there are rich resources in the Psalms for singing of Christ's Kingdom on earth. The classic 'Jesus shall reign' is based on Psalm 72 (Isaac Watts) and 'Joy to the world!' on Psalm 98 (also Watts). Also appropriate for this theme are Psalms 47, 96, 97, 98 and 110.¹⁵

At the close of worship it is important that a psalm or hymn be chosen that is a suitable response to the word preached. This may take the form of an invitation such as 'Sinners Jesus will receive' (Erdmann Neumeister, tr. by Emma Francis Bevan) or 'Come, ye sinners' (Joseph Hart). The content of the sermon may make a hymn of response

for a group of believers more appropriate, such as 'Facing a task unfinished' (Frank Houghton).

Enlarging the Repertoire

It has been estimated that the average congregation only ever sings perhaps fifty per cent of the psalms or hymns available to it, and regularly uses far fewer even than that. There is tension and difficulty associated with introducing new hymns to the repertoire, and some thought needs to be given as to how this may be done. The public worship service is not necessarily the appropriate time to learn a new tune. This may more happily be done at a fellowship or family night, or during a pre-service gathering, or before or after prayer meetings. It is unfair to blame a congregation for reluctance to sing 'new' hymns if no opportunity is given to learn them.¹⁶ There should be some thought given as to the overall balance of the repertoire: if *all* the hymns and psalms are in the language of an age long past what message does this convey? *The Book of Praises* does use contemporary language for the translation of the Psalms, and there are some beautiful contemporary hymns such as 'Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord' (Timothy Dudley-Smith),¹⁷ and 'O how the grace of God amazes me'.¹⁸ There are also the contemporary Scripture songs already referred to. There is no reason then always to sing in the language of a past era, even though we long for a genuine revival that will lead to an outpouring of twentieth century hymnody!

Singing: A Spiritual Activity

Hearty and sincere congregational singing is a tremendous witness and is honouring to God. While care and practice are necessary, it must be remembered that worship is a spiritual activity. The most thoughtful choice of psalms and hymns, the most appropriate tunes and tasteful accompaniment, will fall completely flat without the aid of the

News

Sicily

Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean with a population of five million. The island (5,250 square miles) is about the same size as Wales or the state of Connecticut in the U.S.A.

The country is in political union with Italy but has its own parliament in Palermo. Sicily has been a very poor country but living standards have improved.

This island is the home of the Mafia whose crime syndicates and protection rackets affect all sections of society. One of the missionaries in the process of building friendships with the local people came to know a young businessman quite well. Recently he went to visit him but was told he had been shot dead by the Mafia the previous day.

As we would expect the country is predominantly Roman Catholic (about 94%).

During the last century the Waldensians established several churches. More recently an indigenous group of free evangelical churches has come into being.

Pietro Lorefice, a former Catholic monk, is a leader of the work in Sicily. He is involved in gospel radio work at Ribera. This radio ministry has been effectively reaching Sicily and North Africa. Besides his radio work and pastoral work which includes ministry to a small church in Palermo, pastor Lorefice is engaged in literature work. (He is at present working on the translation of the 1689 Baptist Confession into Italian.)

The E.M.F. (European Missionary Fellowship) has played an important leadership role in supporting, collating and encouraging gospel work in Sicily. Irene Chase from Belfast has been assisting in the work since 1974. In 1984 David and Chell Gray from the U.S.A. began working in an area about 20 miles from Ribera.

Holy Spirit. 'It is . . . not sufficient to have hymns which embody the great doctrines of Scripture. We must sing them under the direction of the Holy Spirit. . . . There is a vast difference between hearty congregational singing which can be induced by a crowd or by a good choir, and true praise which is elicited by the Spirit of God.'¹⁹

*Bill and Sharon James,
Toronto, Canada*

¹ For example the work of Bill Bygroves and John Benton and others in composing Scripture songs for the fellowships at Garston Bridge, Liverpool, and Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey.

² Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) pp. 226, 227.

³ David Breed, quoted in *O Come Let Us Worship*, p. 227.

⁴ Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition* (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Company, 1981), p. 129.

⁵ Hustad, *Jubilate!*, p. 132.

⁶ *Scripture in Song*, Maryborough: Australian Print Group, 1979, no. 42.

⁷ Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship*, p. 240.

⁸ Herbert Carson, *Hallelujah! Christian Worship* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1980), p. 48.

⁹ Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship*, pp. 237, 238.

¹⁰ David G. Preston, ed, *The Book of Praises*, Introduction (Liverpool: Carey Publications, 1986), p. 4.

¹¹ All in *The Book of Praises*, Carey Publications.

¹² *Scripture in Song*, no. 49.

¹³ *The Book of Praises*, Carey Publications, p. 65.

¹⁴ Carson, *Hallelujah!*, has a chapter on the Trinitarian structure of worship, pp. 32-44.

¹⁵ All in *The Book of Praises*.

¹⁶ Some suggestions as to how to teach new tunes are given in *Music and Worship in the Church*, Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice (Abingdon: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 160. For those who would like to enlarge the repertoire of psalms, it should be noted that the tunes selected for the seventy psalms in *The Book of Praises* (Carey Publications) are nearly all reasonably well known hymn tunes.

¹⁷ *Christian Hymns*, Bryntirion: Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1977, no. 34.

¹⁸ *Grace Hymns*. There is a wide selection in *Hymns for Today's Church*, Inter-Varsity Press.

¹⁹ Carson, *Hallelujah!*, p. 41.



Pastor and Mrs. Pietro Lorefice

From a biblical point of view Italy as a whole represents one of the weakest nations in the world. There are more Jehovah's Witnesses than evangelicals. The great need is that more labourers will be thrust into this great harvest field.

Malaysia

Towards the end of 1985, Sri Serdang Church began praying about the possibility of planting another '1689-church' nearer the city of Kuala Lumpur. A little scouting around revealed that a new housing estate called Sri Hartamas on the northern outskirts of the city would be the ideal location.

We had no contact there and our limited finance did not permit renting a house or a shoplot for meetings immediately. We therefore used the flat of a friend in another part of the city to begin weekly Bible studies. This work began in April 1986. Six months later, we were ready to begin worship in a rented shoplot at Sri Hartamas. Of the nucleus of 10 people, six including my wife and I, were members from the Serdang congregation. The church members were mobilised to visit the houses in the neighbourhood once a week — distributing tracts and following up on contacts. The church members also brought their friends from other parts of the city. We believe that, for practical purposes, our 'parish' is anything within 40 minutes drive from the church.

The work was slowly growing when recession suddenly hit Malaysia. One couple had to move to Singapore because of work. Construction stopped in the partially completed housing estate and no new people moved in. On October 27th 1987 I was detained by the police for allegedly 'christianising the Malays'. I was away nearly a year, during which time one couple left us. The remaining church members pressed on with the work of witnessing, under the able leadership of Brother Ang. The preaching was done by the remaining elder of the church, Brother Ho.

I was released on September 17th 1989 and began work immediately by preaching a sermon on the Great Commission, stressing the need to make disciples of 'all nations'. Brother Ho began full-time ministry not long after. (I began 'full-time ministry' behind bars, having resigned from my university job at the end of 1987.) Brother Ho now ministers at Serdang while I concentrate on building up the work at Sri Hartamas as well as beginning a Bible Study group at Subang Jaya, some 20 km west of Kuala Lumpur, with the view of starting another church.

There has been a steady increase in attendance at the worship service of Sri Hartamas, averaging 20 people at the moment. Some 15 people gather for Bible study every Wednesday evening at Sri Hartamas and another 15 at Subang Jaya every Thursday night. The church prayer meeting is held immediately after worship service on Sunday. In addition to this, four or five people gather for prayer before worship begins. This is a voluntary meeting initiated by Brothers Ang and Weng Keong. I also join the prayer meeting at Serdang on Sunday evenings to keep the folk there informed of the progress at the other two places.

The church at Sri Hartamas is still young, and much work and prayer is needed.

POH Boon Sing



*Edwin Caruana and his wife Sylvia,
Charlene and Desiree*

Fiji

The work of Vijay Chandra was described in *R.T.* 112. We must now with great regret and sadness report that following political unrest many people from the two congregations have been forced to leave and after much prayer the Chandras have concluded that the work they came to do cannot be forwarded under the present circumstances or without endangering those who attend the services. Prayer is requested for a door of service to be opened for Vijay and also for the church at Suva and for those believers who have been scattered.

Lancaster, U.K.

During 1988 Phil Arthur was inducted as pastor of the Free Grace Church, Lune Street, Lancaster. The assembly was initiated in 1980. Michael Pearce who used to work for the Banner of Truth, Brian Ventress, and Roy Schofield were involved with a small group in a very tough period of initial perseverance (struggling new churches take note!).

Initially the church hired premises. After about a year an eldership was formed and the church officially constituted on the doctrinal basis of the 1689 Confession. The initial covenant is read out annually. The opportunity arose about four years ago to purchase a shop and convert it into church premises which was very successfully achieved. The members contributed generously in reshaping and refurbishing the spacious premises. About 55 now attend the Lord's Day services.

The members are involved in all the usual methods of evangelism such as door to door work, leaflet distribution, open air meetings, personal invitations and hospitality.

Although circumstances dictated the procuring of a building first, Michael Pearce urges that calling a pastor is the main priority for a new work. He stresses the place of prayer together and seeking to be of the same mind and also testifies to the beneficial support of other churches and ministers.

Malta

In 1985 Edwin Caruana was called to the ministry of a church in his home country of Malta. He became the first Maltese to be ordained as a Baptist minister in 1986 and began a fulltime ministry of pastoring and missionary work on the island which has a population of 320,000 almost all Roman Catholic. Edwin and his wife Sylvia were both brought up as Roman Catholics.

In 1973 the Lord called them out of the Roman Catholic Church through a Norwegian missionary who showed them that although they had 'religion' and knew about Christ, they needed to be born again and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They were among the first born again believers on the island and from the beginning of their Christian walk they were involved in church work.

In January 1987 Edwin took over the pastoral care of a church in Furjana, Malta from an American missionary. The church has about 40 members and is indigenous in character. The language medium is Maltese but a translation service via headphones is available for English speaking visitors. There is a healthy doctrinal emphasis in the church and this is reflected in the expository preaching of the pastor. There is also a strong emphasis on evangelism and an effort underway to plant a church on the adjoining sister island, Gozo. Edwin's Bible training has been by means of self study and he is seeking fellowship with like minded gospel ministers in England.

The Importance of Family Worship

Part 2

Chris Passerello

Last time we discussed briefly the subject of family worship and then got down to the business of surveying available literature. We began with the Bible itself and then we considered catechisms and music books. I concluded by reviewing two Bible story books, namely My Bible Story Book by Dena Korfker, and The Lion Children's Bible. I said that I would refer to another helpful Bible story book. That is where we now resume our survey of literature which can assist us in family worship.

Precious Moments Stories from the Bible Sheri Dunham Haan, illustrations by Samuel J. Butcher, Baker Book House, 280 pp., hardback, \$14.95. This is our favourite Bible story book. As can be expected the layout of the book is superb. The text is large, the stories short and well written, and the illustrations are 'precious'. The children can hardly put this book down. The day the book arrived in our house our seven-year-old son sat down with it and proceeded to read ninety-one pages before he passed it on to his sisters.

The book consists of fourteen sections with several stories per section. Each section deals with one particular theme such as creation, the fall, the life of Christ, or the Second Coming. Eight of the sections form four couplets – Acts of Hate, Deeds of Love; Acts of Unbelief, Deeds of Faith; Acts of Disobedience, Deeds of Obedience; Acts of Pride, Deeds of Humility.

Other Books

There are several other books which are useful as an aid to family worship. These are not easily placed into any of the categories discussed previously.

Tell Me About God

Susan Harding, *Banner of Truth*, 64 pp., paperback, £2.50 (\$5.45). Even though

this book is subtitled *Simple Studies in the Doctrine of God for Children* adults will also find it to be a useful devotional tool. The book contains one lesson for each letter of the alphabet, with lesson titles ranging from 'God is Almighty' to 'God is Zealous'. Each lesson contains a Bible passage reference, a memory verse, a portion of a Psalm, a catechism question from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and a one page explanation of the lesson's subject. The first few pages of the book contain material describing the format of the lessons and helpful hints for their use. (For instance, it is suggested that most of the Psalm portions can be sung to any common-metre tune.)

We worked our way through this book in about one month as part of our family devotions. The entire family found the lessons informative, thought provoking, and interesting. The children especially enjoyed trying to discover an appropriate tune for each Psalm portion. They also had great fun attempting to memorise all twenty-six lesson titles! 'God is almighty, God is blessed, God is the Creator . . .' was often heard during our time together.

Because we have a working acquaintance with the Shorter Catechism we

appreciated the inclusion of the catechism questions. We found it helpful to be reminded of questions and answers we had previously learned and to see them placed in a popular format. In our day and age the use of catechisms is almost a lost art. It is exciting to think that many families may be introduced to the catechism through the use of this book.

Signposts from Proverbs

Rhiannon Weber, illustrated in colour by Lawrence Evans, 99 pp., spiral, Banner of Truth, £3.95. Here is a book which will add to the repertoire of biblical exercises to be happily enjoyed. The proverbs are printed usefully into 32 different categories and the book is a pleasure to handle (see *R.T.* 105, p. 26). The text consists mostly of Scripture quotations taken from the New International Version with occasional parenthetical comments.

Simple Truths About God

Carine Mackenzie, Christian Focus Publications Ltd., paper, \$0.75 each. This is a series of eight books for little ones. Two representative titles are 'God Made Everything' and 'God is Everywhere'. Each book consists of about eight pages of simple text with each page of text facing an attractive photograph. We have found that these books are most appropriate for use with children between the ages of, say, two and five years though older ones will enjoy reading them as well.

Dangerous Journey — The Story of Pilgrim's Progress

Marshall Morgan and Scott (UK), Eerdmans (US), 126 pp., hardback, \$14.95. This is an abridged retelling of Bunyan's classic story. The editors have certainly succeeded in providing a version of this story which is appropriate for modern readers. The wording is updated, simplified and well written, and the illustrations are superb! Our



The pictures in 'Dangerous Journey' are full page (10 inches square) and in colour. The above reproduction very inadequately conveys the superb quality and impact of the pictures.

children could hardly get enough of this book. 'What, only two chapters tonight!' 'Please, read it again!'

This version consists primarily of the active storyline of Bunyan's original with most of the theological conversations (between, for example, Christian and Faithful) edited out of the story. This is the one shortcoming of this version. However, even with that defect, the book has still provided us with many insights into the Christian life and additional topics for family discussion.

Conclusions

Of course, there are many other useful items available which have not been mentioned in this article. For instance, the various Bible Societies (American, British, United, etc.) produce Scripture portion booklets which can be used profitably in family worship. The reader may consider using a Scripture memory plan (such as the Topical Memory System by NavPress), or a daily devotional such as Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening*.

It is hoped that the reader has been stimulated to consider the tremendous supply of resources available for use in our families. May it be our prayer always that our family worship realises the fullest possible potential for all members of our families.

A Report on the 1989 Southern Baptist Founders' Conference

The Law and The Gospel

The Seventh Annual Southern Baptist Founders' Conference met August 1st-4th at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. Believing that God has re-ignited among Southern Baptists an interest in what have been historically called the Doctrines of Grace, 203 pastors and laymen gathered for fellowship and to hear devotional and doctrinal teaching. The registrants came from 26 states for the four-day conference.

The conference theme was 'The Law and the Gospel'. The featured speaker was Walt Chantry who has been pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania for 26 years. Pastor Chantry brought three helpful messages on 'The Moral Law'. On Monday night he preached from Romans 3:19-21 and emphasised what the Law could not do. He reminded his hearers that the Law was never given to provide a way of salvation. Nonetheless, said Chantry, Scripture tells us that we should not hate the Law nor see it as useless. What the Law does do is show men that they are sinners and need the salvation that comes through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His conviction was that because the Law is seldom preached in our day people are not aware of the righteousness of God. He closed the message by asserting that we cannot effectively preach the Gospel without the preaching of the Law. 'The Law and the Gospel are allies,' said Chantry, 'not enemies.'

Pastor Richard Moore of Holtville, California reminded the registrants from the ministry and teaching of the Apostle Paul how the Doctrines of Grace are an encouragement in evan-

gelism. He noted, 'History proves that contrary to killing evangelism, the Doctrines of Grace undergird evangelism.'

Dr. John A. Broadus was the subject of a biographical message by Pastor Bill Ascol of Clinton, Louisiana, on Wednesday afternoon. One of the founders of the S.B.C. and of its first seminary, Broadus personified the scholarship, piety, and theology the Founders' Conference hopes to encourage in our day. Ascol suggested these lessons from the life of Broadus:

1. We need to be balanced in our theology.
2. We need to learn that if we will be faithful in our labour, usefulness will find us and influence will flow from us.
3. We need to learn to be personable.
4. We need to learn always to maintain a fervent love for the lost.
5. We need to learn to make preaching first in our ministries.

In his second message, Walt Chantry warned pastors of the difficulties involved in preaching the Moral Law of God. He reminded his listeners that more than the Moral Law of God is needed to bring a man to repentance. 'It can awaken them to danger,' he said, 'but only grace can bring man to repentance.' In a practical vein he urged preachers to mention often the Gospel and the grace of God when they preach the Ten Commandments.

One of the highlights for many conferees was the message 'Pilgrimage from Dispensationalism and Its Dangers' by Dr. Samuel Storms of Christ Community Church in Ardmore, Oklahoma. Frequently autobiographi-

cal in his message, Dr. Storms began with Matthew 11:2-6 and the apparent misunderstanding by John the Baptist of the nature of the Christ and the Messianic Kingdom. He pointed out that John was expecting the Messiah and the Kingdom to come in one way when it actually came in another. This same mistaken thinking, said Storms, is at the root of the error of Dispensationalism. What needs to be acknowledged is that with the coming of Christ the King came the beginning of Messiah's Kingdom. The fulfilment of all the covenant promises to Israel began with Jesus' first coming, but in a different and secret way than the Jews expected. Just as there is first the seed and then the tree, so the Kingdom literally began with Christ's incarnation, though it will come to full maturity at His Second Coming.

Later on Thursday morning, Dr. Fred Malone of Heritage Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, addressed the subject 'The Law and the Saint'. The summary of his message was found in the words of Jesus, 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.' 'If you understand this,' Malone said plainly, 'you understand the relationship between the Law and the Gospel. This is a declarative statement, not a wish. It's a fact.'

Walt Chantry brought an exposition of Galatians 3:1-29 on Thursday night and highlighted the original purpose of the Moral Law as given in that passage.

On the final morning of the gathering, Ernest C. Reisinger spoke on 'Law and Love' in which he pointed out the biblical connection between God's Law and his love. Reisinger is a Banner of Truth trustee. Also present on Monday was Maurice Roberts, Editor of the *Banner of Truth* magazine.

Other speakers during the conference were Robert A Selph, C. Lawrence

Dodson, Rob Richey, and Samuel K. Tullock. Each session was opened with the fervent singing of doctrinally rich hymns led by Jim Carnes of Memphis. Most sessions included stirring testimonies of how men had come to understand the Doctrines of Grace as Biblical theology.

The 1990 Southern Baptist Founders' Conference is scheduled for July 31st-August 3rd. Again the location is to be Rhodes College in Memphis. (Incidentally, the 1989 U.S. Banner of Truth Conference was held at this location in May and is planned as the location for the 1990 conference as well.) The theme for next year's conference is 'The Church' and David Kingdon of England has been invited as one of the principal speakers. For information about the conference contact North Pompano Baptist Church, 1101 N.E. 33rd Street, Pompano Beach, Florida, 33064.

This report was submitted by Don Whitney, pastor of Glenfield Baptist Church, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

It is only fair to say that in correspondence the editor has learned that there were those at the conference who felt that the 'Law-grace' issue was inadequately presented. However those who were disappointed in no way have become disaffected and nor do they intend to withdraw their support from the conference. The enormous scope of Law and Grace was referred to in some detail in the last issue (R.T. 112). It has been suggested that Bob Sheehan's treatment published in R.T. 112, 'Towards a Biblical Understanding of the Law', does satisfy both sides of the debate, although as noted on page 8, R.T 112, the ramifications of the subject would require many papers if not books. E. F. Kevan's book The Grace of Law (294pp) is a masterpiece and should be kept in print. If Baker do not see its value surely the Banner of Truth will!

Book Reviews

Extemporaneous and written prayers: A case of both/and. A review of Arthur Bennett, **The Valley of Vision. A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions** (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975, reprinted 1983). 224 pp. & xiv. By Michael A. G. Haykin.

Traditionally, Baptists have been very wary of written prayers. Our Baptist forefathers strenuously objected to the liturgical format of the Church of England, in which the corporate recitation of set prayers was a major element. For instance, a prominent item at the trial of John Bunyan (1628-1688) in 1661 was Bunyan's adamant opposition to the use of the Book of Common Prayer (which contained the order and prayers of every Church of England service). Genuine prayer, he maintained, could only come from 'the motions of the Holy Ghost within our hearts.' Indeed, one of Bunyan's earliest works was his *I will pray with the Spirit*, written in 1662, in which he developed at length the position he had maintained at his trial. Set forms of prayer, Bunyan argued, hampered and impeded the Spirit's work in the believer's heart. Rightly he asserted that only 'the Spirit can lift up the soul or heart to God in prayer'! By and large Bunyan's plea for extemporaneous prayer has been heeded by successive generations of Baptists.

However, while Bunyan was certainly right to stress the need for the Spirit to generate genuine prayer, even extemporaneous prayer has a way of becoming rote. Who amongst us has not had the experience, sometimes for a number of days, of stale, lifeless prayer that repeatedly expresses itself in the same way and manner? Although we as

Baptists do not have a liturgical tradition, our individual prayer-lives sometimes do, for often they fall into the same patterns of expression and petition, patterns that all too easily can become ruts. It is at times like these that we could use some outside help, a boost to get moving again. Arthur Bennett's *The Valley of Vision* is ideal in this regard. Although this book has been in print since 1975 and has been reprinted twice, most recently in 1983, it has not received the sort of attention it deserves. Subtitled *A collection of Puritan prayers and devotions*, it contains prayers from the works of fourteen evangelical authors, including three Baptists: Christmas Evans (1766-1838), the Welsh evangelist, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), the well-known preacher from the last century, and, surprise of surprises, Bunyan! The word 'Puritan' in the subtitle is clearly not meant to be taken literally. For Puritanism was historically a phenomenon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather, Bennett employs this term to refer to a form of spirituality which dominated English-speaking Christianity from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, in which there was 'the same spiritual language, . . . the same code of values, . . . the same attitude towards the Christian religion, . . . the same God-centred aspirations' (Preface).

Bennett emphasises that the book is not intended 'to be read as a prayer manual'. The prayers are best used as springboards for a believer's 'communion with a transcendent and immanent God who on the ground of his nature and attributes calls forth all the powers of the redeemed soul in acts of total adoration and dedication' (Preface). The division of the prayers into a number of categories, such as 'Redemption and Reconciliation', 'Holy Aspirations', 'Service and Ministry', and the fact that each prayer is given a title, greatly

facilitates the use of the prayers. Moreover, Bennett has structured the prayers in such a way that they easily become the springboard for deeper reflection and worship which he desires them to be.

My only problem with the book is really a minute one. There is no indication as to the source of each individual prayer. While there is a bibliography which lists the exact works which Bennett used in compiling *The Valley of Vision*, he gives no specific references with regard to each individual prayer. But then I have problems with hymnals that fail to list the dates of authors and composers.

This review was first published in the magazine of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada and is republished here with their permission.

A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. Samuel E. Waldron, 490 pages, E.P. £14.95.

The space here allocated is inadequate in view of the value of this book, the first systematic exposition, as far as we know, of the 1689 Confession. The author is particularly gifted with clarity and ability to analyse. A two page analytic outline (appendix B) shows that, together with the structured outlines of each chapter of the Confession. The following sample is typical:

Q from p. 139

Outline 1

Paras

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| 1 | I. | The definition of human freedom |
| 2-5 | II. | The states of human freedom |
| 2 | A. | Free will in the state of innocency |
| 3 | B. | Free will in the state of sin |
| 4 | C. | Free will in the state of grace |

- | | | |
|---|----|---------------------------------|
| 5 | D. | Free will in the state of glory |
|---|----|---------------------------------|

Outline 2

- | | | |
|---|------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | I. | Its natural liberty |
| 2 | II. | Its original instability |
| 3 | III. | Its fallen inability |
| 4 | IV. | Its renewed ability |
| 5 | V. | Its ultimate immutability |

Inevitably there is more meat in some parts than in others. For instance there is rich substance on pages 387 to 389 on the intermediate state whereas there is too little on so great a central an issue of God and the Holy Trinity. Yet alongside A. A. Hodge and G. I. Williams the volume is a tremendous asset. Where there is shortfall in one the other two are unlikely both to fail, and of course on chapter 20 (taken from the Savoy Confession) and on baptism, Waldron has it all to himself! The book literally teems with sermon outlines. We are to teach doctrine and here it is in plentiful supply.

The volume is enhanced with a sturdy introduction by Robert Paul Martin on the legitimacy and use of Confessions, a section relating the historical sources of the Confession, and a 34 page section devoted to questions.

A reviewer is expected to ferret out inconsistencies. The book is too good to be negative but I will refer to page 321 on church government. The Confession represents a tradition that has always made room for the call to the ministry so there has always been a difference between the pastor (or pastors) and the godly (we hope!) overseeing elders who support them. That too was Spurgeon's position (see sermon 443, vol 8, page 195). Waldron tries to squeeze in a view which just will not fit! The typography and overall production is consistently excellent. Well done EP!

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